

Message Text

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20

ACTION AF-07

INFO OCT-01 NEA-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-05 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 /057 W

----- 071413

R 220838Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9369

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY COTONOU

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR NG XY

SUBJECT: VISIT OF PRESIDENT KOUNTCHE TO DAHOMEY

1. PRESIDENT KOUNTCHE PAID ONE DAY OFFICIAL VISIT TO DAHOMEY NOVEMBER 20. HE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY FOREIGN MINISTER CAPTAIN DJERMAKOYE, MINISTER OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS BOULAMA MANAGA AND CHIEF OF NIGERIEN AIR FORCE AND MEMBER OF SMC CAPTAIN WRIGHT.

2. KOUNTCHE'S VISIT TO COTONOU IS ANOTHER IN SERIES OF VISITS WHICH HE IS MAKING TO NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES. FROM APRIL '74 WHEN KOUNTCHE LED COUP AGAINST FORMER REGIME TO OCTOBER, HE CONCENTRATED ON CONSOLIDATING POSITION OF NEW GOVERNMENT AND DEALING WITH EMERGENCY DROUGHT SITUATION AND LEFT FOREIGN TRAVEL AND REPRESENTATION ABROAD TO HIS MINISTERS. HIS FIRST TRIP OUTSIDE OF COUNTRY SINCE COUP WAS AT UMOA

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CHIEFS OF STATE MEETING IN LOME OCTOBER 11 - 12. THIS

SEEMS TO HAVE WHETTED HIS APPETITE AND SINCE THEN HE HAS TAKEN NUMBER OF QUICK TRIPS USUALLY DECIDED AT LAST MOMENT AT HIS INITIATIVE WHICH SEEMS TO BE CHARACTERISTIC OF SUCH TRAVEL IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD. IN LAST MONTH KOUNTCHE HAS TRAVELED TO TOGO TWICE, UPPER VOLTA ONCE BRIEFLY ON WAY TO LOME, ALGERIA WHERE HE MET FAISAL AND OTHER CHIEFS OF STATE AS WELL AS SIHANOUK, NIGERIA AND LIBYA. AFTER VISIT TO DAHOMEY, WE UNDERSTAND KOUNTCHE WILL SHORTLY VISIT REMAINING NEIGHBORS OF CHAD AND MALI.

3. NIGERIEN SOURCES TELL US THESE VISITS ARE ESSENTIALLY "PRISE DE CONTACT". LOCALLY, THEY ALSO HELP TO ENHANCE KOUNTCHE'S IMAGE AS LEADER ACTIVE AND COMPETENT IN FOREIGN AS WELL AS DOMESTIC AFFAIRS. WHILE MOST OF THESE VISITS APPEAR TO BE GATHERINGS WITHOUT MUCH SUBSTANCE, TRIP TO DAHOMEY PROBABLY HAS GREATER SIGNIFICANCE FOR NIGER BECAUSE OF LATTER'S DEPENDENCY ON DAHOMEY FOR MOST COMMUNICATIONS WITH SEA AND OUTSIDE WORLD. RELATIONS BETWEEN LANDLOCKED STATE AND COASTAL NEIGHBOR ARE NOT ALWAYS HARMONIOUS AS IS TO BE EXPECTED. ANOTHER IRRITANT IS GON'S DETERMINED EFFORT TO NIGERIENIZE PRIVATE SECTOR WHICH INCLUDES MANY DAHOMEAN WORKERS AND DOMESTICS. ON THE OTHER HAND, DAHOMEY AND NIGER SHARE SENSE OF FRUSTRATION OVER SHABBY TREATMENT THEY CLAIM ENTENTE ASSOCIATES ACCORD THEM. PRESIDENT KEREKOU'S ATTACK ON DIVISION OF SPOILS AT UMOA CONFERENCE MADE ON HIS RETURN TO COTONOU FROM LOME WAS ECHOED HERE WITH PRESS COMMENTS THAT EVEN AMONG ENTENTE BROTHERS, RIV ARE GETTING RICHER AND POOR ARE GETTING POORER.

4. DURING VISIT OF AID AMINISTRATOR PARKER TO NIAMEY ON OCTOBER 29-30, PRESIDENT KOUNTCHE RAISED SUBJECT OF GAYA BRIDGE PROJECT AND SAID AT EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY HE WOULD TAKE UP WITH PRESIDENT KEREKOU QUESTION OF DAHOMEY'S CONCURRENCE IN PROJECT. WE UNDERSTAND KOUNTCHE'S BRIEF FOR COTONOU TRIP INCLUDED FILES ON THIS SUBJECT.HECK

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